

Washington, DC – U.S. Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) met Thursday with Roberto “Bobby” Barrera, National Commander of the Disabled Americans Veterans. The pair discussed issues impacting veterans, including the lengthy claims process, the need for adequate training for claims processors and how to improve support for disabled veterans’ family members, who are indispensable in caring for their loved ones. Commander Barrera lives in Del Rio and has been involved with the DAV since he was injured in combat in 1969.

“Disabled veterans have a special set of challenges when it comes to accessing VA services,” Commander Barrera said. “Congressman Rodriguez has always listened to our concerns and has shown great leadership for veterans throughout his district and the nation. I am glad to be working with him on the issues that affect us.”

Congressman Rodriguez told Commander Barrera that the VA is working to address the claims backlog, which has been reduced but is still too great. Congressman Rodriguez added that he will continue to fight to improve VA facilities nationwide, which are 60 years old on average, and to increase the number of veterans who access VA services. Currently, only 5 million veterans out of 23 million nationwide are enrolled with the VA.

“I am always honored to meet with Commander Barrera, who I consider a friend and a great American,” said Congressman Rodriguez. “He served his country dutifully as a Marine in the Vietnam War and continues to serve veterans nationwide as National Commander of the DAV. I will continue to make veterans issues a priority as long as I am a Congressman.”

During the meeting Thursday, Congressman Rodriguez also highlighted a recent visit he had with VA Secretary Eric Shinseki in El Paso. The Congressman and the Secretary discussed the need for services for homeless veterans, improved access to education and job training and enhanced healthcare services for veterans.

Congressman Rodriguez is a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee.

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